United Nations A/C.4/55/L.1/Rev.1

General Assembly

Distr.: Limited
12 October 2000

Original: English

Fifty-fifth session
Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

Organization of work

Note by the Chairman

1. The agenda items allocated by the General Assembly to the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) for consideration are listed in document A/C.4/55/1. Background information on those items, including references to related documentation, is set out in the annotated preliminary list of items to be included in the provisional agenda of the fifty-fifth session (A/55/100).[1]

2. The General Assembly, in rule 99, paragraph (b), of its rules of procedure, calls on each Main Committee to adopt a programme of work indicating, if possible, a target date for the conclusion of its work, the approximate dates of consideration of items and the number of meetings to be allocated for the consideration of each item.

3. The General Assembly decided that the fifty-fifth session should recess not later than Tuesday, 5 December and that, inter alia, the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) should complete its work by Thursday, 9 November 2000 (see A/55/250, para. 13).

4. To that end, the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) may wish to consider adopting as a provisional guideline the approximate dates set out below for the consideration of the items on its agenda with the understanding that it may be revised periodically, as appropriate, according to the availability of related documents. The Committee will also combine consideration of specific items on its agenda in order to ensure full and efficient utilization of the conference facilities allocated to it. As indicated below, Conference Services has allocated 29 meetings to this Committee and it urges the Committee to make every effort to complete its work within the allotted time. Should the Committee wish to change the dates for consideration of items, it would still have to work within the dates and times indicated below. There will be little possibility of servicing informal consultations, working groups or meetings of regional or other groups of Member States. It is essential that available conference services be utilized to the fullest extent.

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5. The Special Political and Decolonization Committee decided at its 10th meeting, held on 10 October, at the formal request of the Chairman of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories, to reschedule the consideration of agenda item 85. Accordingly, the revised programme of work and timetable of the Committee is as follows:

Agenda items	*Dates for consideration*
Organization of work	13 September — a.m.
Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (item 18)	25 September — a.m. 26 September — p.m. 27 September — a.m. 28 September — a.m.
Information from Non-Self-Governing Territories transmitted under Article 73 *e* of the Charter of the United Nations (item 88)	29 September — a.m.
Economic and other activities which affect the interests of the peoples of the Non-Self-Governing Territories (item 89)	
Implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples by the specialized agencies and the international institutions associated with the United Nations (item 90)	
Report of the Economic and Social Council (Chapter VII, section D) (item 12)	
Offers by Member States of study and training facilities for inhabitants of Non-Self-Governing Territories (item 91)	
Effects of atomic radiation (item 82)	10 October — a.m. 11 October — p.m. 12 October — a.m.
International cooperation in the peaceful uses of outer space (item 83)	16 October — a.m. 17 October — p.m. 18 October — a.m. 19 October — p.m.
United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (item 84)	26 October — p.m. 30 October — a.m. 31 October — p.m. 2 November — a.m.

Agenda items	*Dates for consideration*
Report of the Special Committee to Investigate Israeli Practices Affecting the Human Rights of the Palestinian People and Other Arabs of the Occupied Territories (item 85)	6 November — a.m./p.m. 7 November — a.m./p.m.
Comprehensive review of the whole question of peacekeeping operations in all their aspects (item 86)	8 November — a.m./p.m. 9 November — a.m./p.m.
Questions relating to information (item 87)	13 November — a.m./p.m. 14 November — a.m./p.m.

6. In the preparation of the above timetable, the Chairman was guided by the following considerations:

(a) In accordance with established procedures and practices and bearing in mind the availability of documentation, the Committee may wish to hold one general debate covering agenda items 18, 88, 89, 90 and 12 and 91 and individual debates on agenda items 82-87, on the understanding that draft resolutions and/or decisions will be considered separately;

(b) In accordance with established procedure, the General Assembly is expected to take up in plenary meetings the question of the implementation of the Declaration on the Granting of Independence to Colonial Countries and Peoples (item 18) as a whole following the completion of its consideration of other decolonization items allocated to it and after the Committee has completed that aspect of its work for the session;

(c) Representatives of Non-Self-Governing Territories and petitioners will be heard as early as possible during the Committee's consideration of the related items;

(d) Bodies and individuals having an interest in the question of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas) (item 51) will be heard in the Committee in conjunction with the consideration of the items in plenary meetings.

7. Subject to the above provisional programme of work being acceptable to the Committee and in order to facilitate its work, the Chairman wishes to suggest that the list of speakers in the general debate covering its agenda items 18, 88, 89, 90 and 12 and 91 be closed on Monday, 25 September, at 6 p.m. The Committee will take decisions relating to the general debates on the remaining items at the appropriate time.

8. The Committee wishes also to draw attention to the decisions of the General Assembly on the organization of its work contained in document A/55/250, sections II.B-II.N.

9. Members' attention is drawn to the fact that the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly expects the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) to submit their views or comments on the proposed medium-term plan and its revisions (see document A/54/16, Part II). The reports of the Committee for Programme and Coordination are contained in documents A/55/16 (Part I) and Corr.1-2 and A/55/16 (Part II). The proposed medium-term plan for the period 2002-2005 is contained in document A/55/6 (Programmes 1-25).

10. Members are also requested to bear in mind the General Assembly's decision that morning and afternoon meetings should start promptly at 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. both for all plenary meetings and for meetings of the Main Committees during the fifty-fifth session. It was also decided that, as a cost-saving measure, every effort should be made to ensure that plenary meetings and meetings of the Main Committees adjourn by 1 p.m. and 6 p.m., respectively, and that no meetings should be held on weekends (see A/55/250, para. 14). Members' attention is also drawn to the Assembly's decision to waive at this session the quorum required, under rule 108 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly, for the Chairman to declare a meeting open and permit the debate to proceed (see A/55/250, para. 15).

11. In view of the limited number of meetings available to the Committee, it is suggested that the time limit for statements be set at 10 minutes, with the exception of statements made by the spokesmen of groups of delegations, which would be limited to 15 minutes.

12. In order to allow the distribution of prepared texts of statements made in the Committee to delegations, specialized agencies, observers, interpreters and record-writers, 300 copies are required. A minimum of 30 copies should be given in advance of delivery of the statement, in order to help the Secretariat to provide the best possible service.

Notes

[1] For the final list of agenda items adopted by the General Assembly, see document A/55/251.